

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph, beginning at page 11, paragraph 36, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0036] Radiation confinement coating 304 is also formed on NSOM probe 110 and extends from adjacent to probe tip 310 along the side surface of the probe. Radiation confinement coating 304 provides additional confinement of the pulses of laser light in optically transmissive core 300 in sections of NSOM probe 110 that may otherwise be particularly leaky, such as the narrow section near probe tip 310 and any sections with a tight radius of curvature. Additionally, radiation confinement coating 304 substantially defines the area of probe tip 310, by its absence. It may extend as far as or to an opening adjacent to the input plane or may only extend a portion of that distance. In an exemplary embodiment in which the NSOM probe has a 90° bend it is desirable for radiation confinement coating 304 to extend at least around the bend, as shown in Figure 4. Radiation confinement coating ~~403~~ 304 has high reflectivity near the peak wavelength of the pulses of laser light and desirably has low absorptivity in this band as well. It may include at least one metal and/or dielectric layer. It is further noted, as shown in Figure 4, that it may be desire for radiation confinement coating 304 to be substantially reflective to light that may be used for optically monitoring the position of NSOM probe 110.